

EPA REGION III

◇Office of Public Affairs

◇◇Early Bird Headlines

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***** MORNING HOT LIST *****

Cabot, Dimock families near settlement on gas drilling contamination

SCRANTON TIMES-DISPATCH A high-profile and often bitter lawsuit brought by three dozen Dimock Twp. families against Cabot Oil and Gas Corp. is nearing a settlement for several residents who allege natural gas drilling contamination harmed their health and property, according to court papers filed in federal court late Monday. The amended motion filed by attorneys for the residents identifies the settling plaintiffs, but the names have been redacted. The settlement amounts and terms are not disclosed. The main purpose of the new court filing is to create a fund to distribute settlement money, but the document details some conditions of the otherwise confidential agreement. Cabot submitted the offers in May and June, and the settling families were required to sign a broad release "outlining the terms of the settlement and requiring complete confidentiality" about its content, according to the filing. The sides aim to complete the settlement process for the families that have signed off on it within 60 days, according to the motion. As settlement money is paid to each family, its case will be dismissed. The motion Monday follows earlier public signals that the two sides were close to an agreement. In a conference call with investors on July 25, Cabot CEO Dan O. Dinges said the company had reached verbal settlement agreements with 32 of 36 Dimock households and was continuing to negotiate with the remaining families.

Alcosan prepares to petition EPA for affordable stormwater control

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE Permeable pavements, street and roof gardens, tree plantings and rain barrels should be used as "green infrastructure" as part of the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority plan to prevent sewer overflows, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and Pittsburgh Councilman William Peduto said at a news conference Wednesday. They also called for a more regional approach to keep raw sewage from overflowing during wet weather. The first public hearing is tonight on Alcosan's \$2.8 billion plan that must be submitted to the federal government at the end of January 2013. The green infrastructure could be used to prevent rain from getting into the sewer system, they said. "Rainwater is not free. We're all paying for how we handle it," Mr. Fitzgerald said. "Alcosan, if it can divert some of it to green spaces, parks and gardens, won't have to pay to treat it." The county officials stated their preferences on the eve of the first of 13 public meetings Alcosan will hold over the next two months to gather testimony on its proposed wet-weather control plan. The meeting is scheduled from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Sheraton Station Square Hotel on the South Side.

Cardin: Farmers can meet Bay goals

THE EASTON STAR DEMOCRAT EASTON — Farmers have the tools to reach their federally mandated

pollution cleanup goals, particularly as a nutrient trading program develops, U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Md., said Wednesday. Cardin stopped at The Star Democrat for an editorial board meeting Wednesday morning before heading to Ocean City for the annual MaCO conference that included a panel discussion on federal support for Chesapeake Bay cleanup efforts. Now in its second phase, the Bay pollution diet, a series of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), includes Watershed Implementation Plans (WIP) for each of the seven jurisdictions in the watershed, including Maryland. The second phase of the TMDL moved down to the county level, where officials had to come up with plans for reducing pollution loads. In Talbot County, the costs of implementing the pollution reduction goals is estimated at about \$84 million. And for the rural county, much of the reduction efforts must come from the agriculture sector. Cardin talked about needing a healthy Bay for a strong economy, and said the challenge is that the cleanup falls on a number of stakeholders. The agriculture sector is one such stakeholder. Initially, local farmers had reduction goals that they could not reach. Eventually, however, after the model used for target reductions moved to a smaller, county scale, those numbers became manageable. But while manageable, the goals are not without challenges. Cardin, however, said he believes the farm community has the tools to meet the goals of the agriculture sector. "I think the farmers will be able to meet this," he said. One thing that could help farmers, Cardin said, is a trading program that would provide a revenue source for farmers who do more than they have to do. Talbot County farmers, for example, led the state last year in planting cover crops. A trading program would allow the buying and selling of nutrient credits that have a monetary value paid to a seller for installing Best Management Practices (BMP) that reduce nutrients, according to the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Farmers who install more BMPs (like cover crops) than necessary could sell their credits.

PENNSYLVANIA

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Alcosan prepares to petition EPA for affordable stormwater control Permeable pavements, street and roof gardens, tree plantings and rain barrels should be used as "green infrastructure" as part of the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority plan to prevent sewer overflows, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and Pittsburgh Councilman William Peduto said at a news conference Wednesday. They also called for a more regional approach to keep raw sewage from overflowing during wet weather. The first public hearing is tonight on Alcosan's \$2.8 billion plan that must be submitted to the federal government at the end of January 2013. The green infrastructure could be used to prevent rain from getting into the sewer system, they said. "Rainwater is not free. We're all paying for how we handle it," Mr. Fitzgerald said. "Alcosan, if it can divert some of it to green spaces, parks and gardens, won't have to pay to treat it." The county officials stated their preferences on the eve of the first of 13 public meetings Alcosan will hold over the next two months to gather testimony on its proposed wet-weather control plan. The meeting is scheduled from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Sheraton Station Square Hotel on the South Side. The Alcosan plan, required under a consent decree approved by federal court in 2008, focuses entirely on so-called "gray infrastructure," and includes construction of bigger collector pipes and two massive underground tunnels to store wet-weather sewer flows until they can be processed through an expanded Alcosan treatment facility.

DEP decides not to enforce gasoline vapor recovery systems The state Department of Environmental Protection has decided not to enforce a requirement that new gas stations in southwestern and southeastern Pennsylvania install gasoline vapor recovery systems, which since 1992 have been used to limit emissions of air pollutants that cause smog. Those Stage II vapor recovery systems are attached to gas pump nozzles and siphon fumes emitted while pumping gas. According to the DEP, most newer vehicles have their own vapor recovery systems, and that could make the gas station vapor systems redundant. Kevin Sunday, a DEP spokesman, said Wednesday the department hasn't determined the actual percentage of vehicles in the state equipped with vapor recovery technology, but it will need to complete a state-specific technical analysis to determine "what comparable measures,

if any, would be necessary in order to repeal the Stage II program in this [commonwealth]." Mr. Sunday said the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 72 percent of the vehicles on the road today have or are expected to have on-board vapor recovery technology by June 2013.

SCRANTON TIMES-DISPATCH

Cabot, Dimock families near settlement on gas drilling contamination A high-profile and often bitter lawsuit brought by three dozen Dimock Twp. families against Cabot Oil and Gas Corp. is nearing a settlement for several residents who allege natural gas drilling contamination harmed their health and property, according to court papers filed in federal court late Monday. The amended motion filed by attorneys for the residents identifies the settling plaintiffs, but the names have been redacted. The settlement amounts and terms are not disclosed. The main purpose of the new court filing is to create a fund to distribute settlement money, but the document details some conditions of the otherwise confidential agreement. Cabot submitted the offers in May and June, and the settling families were required to sign a broad release "outlining the terms of the settlement and requiring complete confidentiality" about its content, according to the filing. The sides aim to complete the settlement process for the families that have signed off on it within 60 days, according to the motion. As settlement money is paid to each family, its case will be dismissed. The motion Monday follows earlier public signals that the two sides were close to an agreement. In a conference call with investors on July 25, Cabot CEO Dan O. Dinges said the company had reached verbal settlement agreements with 32 of 36 Dimock households and was continuing to negotiate with the remaining families.

ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL

Bethlehem plans to redevelop Hoover-Mason Trestle at old Steel plant Bethlehem wants to make it an elevated path connecting the Sands casino with SteelStacks. As Bethlehem Steel turned into an industrial giant a century ago, it built a trestle to move carloads of ore from a pit along the Lehigh River to its hulking blast furnaces that powered its flagship plant. Now, community leaders are looking to see if the Hoover-Mason Trestle can be reused as an elevated pedestrian path, connecting the new SteelStacks art and entertainment campus near the rusting blast furnaces to where the Sands casino built its resort over the old ore pits a third of a mile away. "This is a very unique opportunity to capitalize on this very important part of the site's history," Mayor John Callahan said at a news conference Wednesday in front of the blast furnaces. A \$236,000 study, being conducted by the planning firm of Wallace Roberts & Todd of Philadelphia, will include several public meetings over the next four months to determine cost and design.

ONLINE ONLY: VALLEY 610: Sierra Club opposes Allentown water, sewer lease The Lehigh Valley chapter of the environmental group the **Sierra Club** has come out against Allentown's plan to lease its water and sewer facilities to raise cash to pay skyrocketing employee pension costs that are expected to hit as much as \$25 million in 2020. Here's why they aren't fans, directly from the group's press release: "This seems at first blush like a lifeline to a city struggling financially but in actuality may be a recipe for disaster.

Not only are water rates to residents projected to double under any leasing scheme but privatization would put Allentown's jewel of a park system – much of it along the Little Lehigh Creek, the city's prime drinking water source – under the control of a private entity that could exploit that watershed without concern for environmental damage that could result. Opportunities to market Allentown's plentiful water to others would pass away from the city to an entity not controlled by Allentown's citizens. In what condition would the system and its watershed be returned to the city after 50 years of private exploitation? The national Sierra Club recommends any municipal water system privatization follow five necessary steps before adoption:

PLUM-OAKMONT PATCH

Verona Officials Discuss Multibillion-Dollar Sewer Project

ALCOSAN must make major improvements by 2026, and Verona officials have begun discussing how it will impact the borough financially. Verona Council has begun discussing how a \$2 billion improvement plan for the

Allegheny County Sanitary Authority's system will impact borough residents financially. In 2008, ALCOSAN became party to a consent decree issued by the Federal Court in Pittsburgh on behalf of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the Allegheny County Health Department. Consent decrees have been issued to municipalities across the nation, including Verona and Plum boroughs, to comply with objectives set by the federal Clean Water Act and Combined Sewer Overflow Control Policy. Eighty three municipalities and boroughs in Allegheny County will be affected by the project. The ALCOSAN consent decree was the result of seven years of negotiations and compromise. The Wet Weather Plan, which identifies wastewater infrastructure needs through 2046, is part of improvements mandated with a deadline of Sept. 30, 2026.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Pa.)

Residents of Pa. drilling town near settlement Residents of a northeastern Pennsylvania town who say their well water was poisoned by a gas driller are nearing a settlement of their long-running and highly contentious federal lawsuit. Court documents filed this week indicate that residents in the tiny community of Dimock Township have agreed to a confidential settlement with Houston-based Cabot Oil & Gas Corp. Dimock became a flashpoint in the national debate over gas drilling and a technique called hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, after residents claimed in 2009 that Cabot polluted their water supply with methane gas and toxic chemicals and made some of them violently ill. Cabot denied responsibility. Federal environmental regulators tested the aquifer this year and found the water in Dimock is safe to drink, a conclusion disputed by residents who refuse to use their wells.

DELAWARE

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

Columnist: Power lines and the urban forest(yesterday) Washington area residents tend to think about the metropolis's imperfect system of electricity delivery when it fails, as it did spectacularly on the night of June 29 with the arrival of a broad, fast-moving storm we now know as a derecho. Todd Bolton, as the arborist for Takoma Park, is mindful every day of the precarious coexistence of the urban forest and the power lines strung up on poles 25 to 35 feet in the air. On some corners in this historic little city, so many wires seem to be held aloft that you might think you are looking up to some mystical dreamcatcher, though one that seems to prefer collective nightmares at times of hurricanes, tornadoes, derechos, wind shears, ice storms and the occasional Snowmageddon.

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE

Letters: Coal's mindset, Manchin and coal haters, lenient sentence CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- A few friends and I visited Rep. David McKinley's forum at WVU "America's Energy Roadmap to 2050" as outsiders. At the head table, flanking McKinley were Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and WVU President Jim Clements. Others at the table were energy CEOs, other industry leaders and a UMW representative. There were also three environmental groups represented among the 25 at the table. It would be fair to characterize these three groups as "capital intensive," as compared to "membership intensive" environmental groups.

BLUEFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH

Editorial: Gas into cash — IDA targets landfill methane

Tazewell County officials are taking their goal of converting trash into gas another step further. It is our hope that the unique plan can produce positive dividends for the local governing body. It was announced last week that the county's Industrial Development Authority had entered into a partnership to capture, purify and sell the methane-containing landfill gas at the county's landfill in Tazewell.

Landfill gas is produced from the natural decomposition of food waste, yard waste and other organic materials in the landfill. It typically consists of approximately 50 percent methane, 30 to 40 percent carbon dioxide and a 10 to 15 percent mixture of methane gas. However, natural gas is almost 100 percent methane, according to a county press release announcing the project.

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

Judge allows sale of Sparrows Point to winning bidders Buyers say they're interested in finding manufacturers to restart work at the steel mil. WILMINGTON, Del.— — A federal bankruptcy judge approved Wednesday night the sale of the Sparrows Point steel mill for \$72.5 million to a redevelopment firm working with a liquidation company, but the buyers said the plant might not be dismantled. Hilco Trading, an Illinois liquidator purchasing the property with St. Louis-based Environmental Liability Transfer, told the judge that it would market the mill to potential operators — exactly what the steelworkers' union vowed to do itself in an effort to save Sparrows Point and its 2,000 jobs. "We recognize that the sale process was maybe not as long as it could have been," said Eric W. Kaup, Hilco's general counsel. "We are interested in finding operators who will reopen parts or all of the mill."

Maryland gets \$5.8 million grant to help teach climate change Teachers in Maryland are about to get new help and encouragement to talk about the touchy topic of global warming in their classrooms. The National Science Foundation announced Wednesday that it is awarding \$5.8 million for improving climate-change education in Maryland and Delaware through a partnership including universities and school systems from both states. The two-state initiative is one of six such education projects the foundation is funding across the country and in the nation's Pacific island territories. "At this point in our existence it's really important people understand about climate, why it's changing and what our options are," said Donald Boesch, president of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science and one of the leaders of the Maryland-Delaware partnership.

Annapolis public housing gets new solar panels

New business model aims to put renewable energy in public housing. At one of Annapolis' public housing buildings last week, new solar panels on the roof collected energy to heat hot water for more than two dozen apartments below. Inside, a message scrawled on the wall asked whoever had been urinating in the hallway to knock it off.

It seems an odd juxtaposition — high technology above, reeking hallways below — but the two are directly related.

The outdated buildings of the cash-strapped housing authority made them prime targets for a company that has come up with an innovative business plan to capture renewable energy credits by spreading green technology — in this case, installing solar panels on the roofs of two public housing complexes at no charge. The high-tech panels at Harbour House happened to have been installed at about the same time U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development inspectors in June deemed the housing authority's seven properties substandard.

SALISBURY DAILY TIMES

Cardin seeks to help Maryland farmers hurt by the drought SALISBURY -- Amid withering cornstalks and debates about crop insurance, U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin is looking for ways to ensure the drop in output doesn't harm poultry farmers. "I really am worried about poultry and that's why they need immediate relief," Cardin said Wednesday while meeting with staffmembers of The Daily Times. "We need more rational policies and I don't believe it's in our national interest to maintain the mandate on corn ethanol." One of the reasons organizations like The National Chicken Council, companies like Perdue and Gov. Martin O'Malley are all concerned about the ethanol mandate is because in years like 2012 when much of the harvest is dead or dying that leaves very little for food production. Specifically, it requires 40 percent of the annual corn harvest go to ethanol production for fuel.

Coastal Bays: Environment education takes center-stage

Less than two weeks before school starts, many teachers and administrators aren't vacationing with their families or enjoying a day at the beach. They are working, committing long, hard hours to prepare for the 2012-2013 academic year. Last week, more than 160 education professionals gathered in Western Maryland at Rocky Gap State Park. Administrators, supervisors, teachers and environmental educators from across the state convened to refine their skills as instructional leaders charged with the development, revision and implementation of their PreK-12 environmental literacy program. All 24 county school systems in Maryland sent a team of representatives from their Local Education Agency (LEA).... This is an exciting time for environmental education. Every county in Maryland is preparing to implement their environmental literacy plan. While there will be common elements, each county has flexibility in how they will ensure that every high school graduate meets the state requirement for environmental literacy. Many school systems are refining existing courses to include a transdisciplinary approach to tackling complex environmental issues in the classroom. Some school systems are developing new courses to meet the requirement.

Surfers link more injuries to beach replenishment OCEAN CITY -- Beach replenishment fills in the trough between the natural sandbar and the beach sand, and in doing so, takes away what's effectively an underwater speed bump that slows the punch of approaching waves. Whether that's creating more dangerous conditions for surfers and swimmers remains an unsettled argument.

CARROLL COUNTY TIMES

Editorial: Pollution down in the bay One good thing coming from the lack of rain this summer is that the amount of pollution running into the Chesapeake Bay is lower because there is less runoff. Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, events which caused flooding throughout the watershed region, as well as a wet spring contributed to an increase in pollution last year, and groups tasked with monitoring the health of the bay were concerned about the long term impact for the bay. The increase in pollution leads to dead zones, areas of the bay where there is too little oxygen for fish to survive. But the Maryland Department of Natural Resources said Tuesday that the lack of rain this year has reduced the amount of pollution going into the bay. The agency said that samples taken last week show the areas where oxygen levels are too low to support life are about half of what they normally are at this time of the year, and they are down 30 percent from the typical peak period of July. The Associated Press noted this week that the decrease is good news for those tracking bay restoration efforts because it shows the estuary responds quickly to pollution reductions. And there is hope that with new regulations that are being put in place to cut pollution, heavy rain won't have as bad of an impact as it might have in past years.

THE EASTON STAR DEMOCRAT

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MARYLAND GAZETTE

Frederick County fears price tag of bay cleanup

"It's No. 1 on my agenda and other counties are talking about it, too," said Frederick County Commissioners' President Blaine R. Young (R). "Counties are dealing with pension and other budget problems, and trying to figure out the basics of how they can deal with this. To me, this is catastrophic." The Frederick County Board of Commissioners has also asked for an emergency meeting with its state delegation, hopefully within the next three weeks, Young said. In the meantime, the Maryland Association of Counties is sponsoring several forums on state-mandated changes to stormwater and septic systems during the weeklong conference. The state plan is part of a larger effort initiated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to clean up the bay over the next 13 years, as required by the federal Clean Water Act.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Md.)

Group questions Chesapeake pollution trading's impact on poor communities WASHINGTON — The impact on poor communities of cutting Chesapeake Bay pollution through credit trading is being questioned in a report released Wednesday by a nonprofit policy analysis group.

VIRGINIA

LYNCHBURG NEWS & ADVANCE

Dominion Va. Power could spend \$40 million at N. Anna NORTH ANNA -- In the wake of the Louisa County earthquake a year ago, Dominion Virginia Power could be spending as much as \$40 million to make its North Anna

nuclear power station better able to resist earthquakes and other damage. The station suffered no damage from last year's Aug. 23 temblor, which knocked the two 980-megawatt reactors offline. The reactors shut down automatically — "tripped" — with the onset of the quake's shaking. "The plant's more robust than you suspect," Eric Hendrixson, North Anna's director of nuclear engineering, said of the earthquake's impact on the station. Hendrixson made the comments Wednesday during a media tour of the plant as the magnitude-5.8 quake's anniversary approaches.

MISCELLANEOUS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Interior Department fine-tunes drilling rule put in place after 2010 Gulf oil spill WASHINGTON — Government regulators issued a final set of safety rules for offshore drilling Wednesday, fine-tuning a series of emergency measures put in place after the BP oil spill in 2010.

EPA to approve sorghum for cleaner ethanol; experts say grain has less impact on food prices BISMARCK, N.D. — The federal government is on the verge of approving a grain mainly used as livestock feed to make a cleaner version of ethanol, a decision officials say could give farmers a new moneymaking opportunity, boost the biofuels industry and help the environment.

Johnson & Johnson removing harsh chemicals from adult toiletries and cosmetic products by 2015 TRENTON, N.J. — Johnson & Johnson plans to remove trace amounts of potentially cancer-causing and other dangerous chemicals from nearly all its adult toiletries and cosmetic products worldwide within 3 1/2 years.

Report: Illegal logging in Mexico's monarch butterfly reserve down to near zero MEXICO CITY — Illegal logging has practically been eliminated in the western Mexico wintering grounds of the monarch butterfly, according to a research report released Wednesday, and Mexican officials now hope to use the successful program of anti-logging patrols and payments to rural residents to solve other forestry conflicts throughout the country.

HUFFINGTON POST

In America's National Parks, Air Pollution Knows No Boundaries Summer is a time when American families plan vacations. Many are centered on the natural beauty of our country and the National Parks System. However, what many tourists may not anticipate is that the destination of their journey is being impacted by air pollution in the form of soot and haze, despite laws that were put into place as far back as the 1970s. In 1977, there was strong bipartisan support in Congress to mandate the restoration of air in 156 of the country's national parks and wilderness regions. There were given the designation of Class 1 Areas. It was the responsibility of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to adopt rules to prevent these locations from deteriorating further.

CLEAN TECHNICA

EXAMINER.COM